LABOUR MONTHLY

EDITOR R. PALME DUTT

THE INDONESIAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

by ARTHUR CLEGG

Other articles by

R.P.D. (Notes of the Month)

QUÆSTOR

MARGOT HEINEMANN

NORAH BROWN

AND E. VARGA

(The course of the Industrial Cycle after the War)

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Vol. XXVII. No. 12

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LABOUR MONTHLY **134 BALLARDS LANE, LONDON, N.3.**

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The articles in LABOUR MONTHLY are indexed in the International Index to Periodicals, New York City, U.S.A., as well as in the annual index in each December issue.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: United Kingdom, 12 months 7s. Postage paid. Abroad, 8s., from LABOUR MONTHLY, 134, Ballards Lane, London, N.3.

A stencilled Discussion Guide to the magazine is available to readers at 3s. a year inclusive of postage.

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

THIS number of the LABOUR MONTHLY goes to press before the opening of the Communist Party Congress. Comment on the outcome of the Congress will accordingly have to be held over till January. What is already clear from the discussion preceding the Congress, no less than from the 317 resolutions submitted by branches, is the intense political interest, questioning and searching, which is it present characteristic of all active sections of the working-class movement. Nor is this surprising. We are now in the full stream of all the new problems and opportunities arising from the end of the war and the return of the Labour Government. The municipal elections have confirmed the result of the general election. Labour stands with a full mandate from the people, equally in national and in local affairs, to fulfil its electoral programme. A great testing time has opened for the entire labour movement and its capacity for leadership during the next five years in the sight of the people. This test takes place in the midst of the formidable problems of the new world situation after the war, of Britain's changed position in the world, and of the pressing social and economic needs at home. Are the present indications of policy and practical programme of the Government adequate to meet these problems? To this question it is now necessary to give the most serious attention; for the first formative months of the five years have already passed, and the outlines of policy are taking shape.

Crisis of Foreign Policy

The gravest character of the present position is the serious worsening of the international situation since Labour took office. When the electors threw out Toryism at the general election, one of the principal reasons governing this landslide (as the whole preceding "Guilty Men" propaganda revealed) was condemnation of the entire policy of Munichism, that is, of blind anti-Soviet anti-Communist hostility and appeasement of fascism and reaction in Europe, which resulted in the war. This found current expression in the universal popular condemnation of the type of Tory pro-fascist imperialist policy which conducted the war of intervention in Greece to establish a quisling government by the power of bombs and tanks against the Greek people, or which pursued appeasement to Franco. On the walls of the towns of this country can still be read the slogans "Vote for Labour and Friendship with the Soviet Union." Few of the electors who voted Labour can have expected that within a few months of their election victory the Foreign Secretary placed in office by their vote would be delivering violent Palmerstonian tirades against the Soviet Union, with the most dangerous worsening of British-Soviet relations since the days of Chamberlain; that the first post-war international conference of the leading Powers of the United Nations should have ended in a deadlock; and that, alongside the continuance of armed maintenance of reaction in Greece and extended economic concessions to Franco, a new war of intervention should have been begun against the peoples of Indonesia and Indo-China.

Anti-Soviet Doctrinaires

This foreign policy, applauded by the Tories, and received with glum silence or even protests from the Labour benches, does not correspond to the popular electoral verdict of July 26, the principles of the labour movement or the wishes of the majority of Labour M.Ps. What the electors in general could not know was that, while their vote expressed condemnation of Tory pro-fascist policies and desire for a democratic foreign policy of co-opera-

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tion with the Soviet Union and democratic anti-fascist forces in Europe and the world, the peculiar political configuration in this country at present is such that the execution of this policy would fall into the hands of a small group which has a long, notorious background of the most violent and envenomed anti-Soviet and anti-communist hostility. Foreknowledge of this danger was, in fact, one of the considerations influencing the Communists earlier in the year to make their suggestion (which subsequent political developments proved to be unsuitable) for a broad pro-Crimea combination after the election to ensure that the basis of British foreign policy in the British-Soviet Treaty and Crimea Agreement and programme of the United Nations should not be deflected by the anti-Soviet doctrinaires. The electoral verdict of July 26 proved that the speed of advance of the internal political situation rendered any such proposal inappropriate. Hence the greater responsibility now falls on the labour movement to see that the present disastrous foreign policy is reversed and replaced by a democratic foreign policy.

Mr. Bevin's Tirade

Mr. Bevin's second main speech on foreign policy — made, ironically enough, on November 7, just prior to attending the Soviet Anniversary reception—repeated and carried forward in more violent form the tendencies of the first. He combined denunciation of the Socialist Soviet Union with fawning on American imperialism. He proclaimed for the first time officially the aim of the Western Bloc and affirmed its innocence of evil intention, although this project is notoriously and noisily backed by all the former Vichy and collaborationist elements as the up-to-date version and continuance of Hitler's Pan-Europe. He announced his "suspicions" of the Soviet Union, and, with the typical one-eyed outlook of British imperialism, accused it of "cutting across the throat of the British Empire" for daring to propose participation in the trusteeship of the former Italian colonies in Northern Africa. By this accusation he appeared to imply that he regarded the Mediterranean as a British lake, of no concern to the Soviet Union, oblivious of the fact that the ceaseless Anglo-American meddling in the internal affairs of the Balkan countries and proposal to settle the future of the Middle East on an exclusively Anglo-American basis (made in his subsequent speech on Palestine, which in other respects showed progressive features and a laudable resistance to Zionist clamour) might be much more justly regarded as "cutting across the throat of the Soviet Union."

Jingo Tub-Thumping

He spoke of the Berlin Agreement and the arrangements for the settlement of Europe to prevent new German aggression in a way that appeared to cast doubt on the firmness of his resolve for the fulfilment of its provisions. He sagely opined that "all this chopping and changing of frontiers during hundreds of years have made people very little richer or more secure"—blissfully oblivious that the principal "chopping and changing of frontiers during hundreds of years" has been the continuous expansion of British world domination, aggression, invasion, conquest and annexation to cover one quarter of the earth. Announcing that "it is time we sang our own song a bit" (when have British statesmen ever done anything else?), he proceeded to sing the glories of the British Empire (a curious conception of "our own song" for a socialist) as the dispenser of "freedom" to other nations, apparently oblivious of the fact that six-sevenths of its population is held in subjection without the elementary basis of democracy, and that a crisis is looming in India as a result of this denial of democratic freedom. In

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short, a speech of the customary jingo tub-thumping type, such as used to be familiar from J. H. Thomas in his palmiest days before his sudden disappearance from public life, or such as earned the old I.L.P. demi-gods, MacDonald and Snowden, the Freedom of the admiring City of London during the late unlamented Second Labour Government.

Tory Policy for Labour?

Under the proud title "He Speaks for Britain," the Labour Press Service of November 14 officially endorsed Bevin's speech:—

> There is no doubt that national opinion is ranged behind Mr. Bevin in his handling of foreign affairs.

Meeting the criticism expressed by Labour back-benchers and the rank and file, who are concerned at the continuity of Tory foreign policy by a Labour majority, the Labour Press Service proceeds:—

> That others should imagine that, because Mr. Bevin's policy is at present largely approved by Mr. Churchill and the Conservative Party, it is thereby wrong, requires more elucidation.

The "elucidation" is provided by an extract from the former Oxford lecturer and B.B.C. expert, P. G. Walker, M.P.:—

> "I have never held," he said, "that one should change one's views because one's political opponents agree with them. Otherwise it would be very easy for those opponents to dictate one's policy."

Mr. Bevin's critics in and out of parliament would do well to ponder this truism.

Continuity and Discontinuity

Of course, if pigs should fly and Tories should be found madly cheering every proposal for nationalisation or for strengthening friendship with the Soviet Union or for supporting the new anti-fascist Democratic Governments in Eastern Europe, it would be unfortunate to allow such Tory cheers to deflect the policy. But that is hardly the situation; and every neophyte in the labour movement knows that Tory cheers for a labour speaker means that a policy is being pursued contrary to the interests of the labour movement. The problem is not an abstract problem of "continuity of foreign policy." The problem is that precisely in respect of the progressive elements of the former Coalition Government's policy, expressed in the Crimea and Berlin Agreements and recognition of the joint leadership of the three main Powers of the United Nations, there is discontinuity and a shift for the worse. The continuity is reserved for the most reactionary Tory trends, as expressed in policy over Greece, Franco, the Western Bloc, coddling reaction in Germany, sniping at popular anti-fascist democracy in Eastern Europe, refusing freedom to India and the colonial peoples, and fawning on the dollar dictators.

Offensive Against Peace

It is not surprising that the most unrestrained offensive of reaction should be conducted at this moment against the whole basis of the Teheran-Crimea-Berlin Agreements and the Three-Power unity which is the indispensable foundation for world peace and for the success of the United Nations Organisation. This offensive accompanies and even springs from the victory of the democratic alliance over fascism and the powerful advance of the working-class and democracy. It is precisely because the defeat of fascism means a blow to reaction everywhere; because the Soviet Union has grown in strength and world influence; because the working-class grows in strength and confidence, as seen in the advance of the Communist Parties in all countries as well as in the formation of the World Trade Union Federation; because new democratic governments have come into being, and because capitalist economy is conscious of increasingly insoluble problems ahead, that the offensive of reac-

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tion grows ever more reckless and desperate, so that the first year of "peace" breathes little yet of peace. Hence the anti-democratic intrigues, the manoeuvres to disrupt working-class unity, the moves to build sectional power-blocs, the atom-bomb nerve war, and the anti-soviet provocation. The offensive of reaction is directed in the first place against the basis of the Teheran-Crimea-Berlin, Agreements and Three-Power unity precisely because these register in durable form and binding terms the victory of the democratic alliance over fascism, and represent a barrier to the revival of fascism, anti-soviet intrigues or renewed world war. The offensive of reaction is directed to break this barrier.

Back to Three-Power Unity

Accordingly reactionary propaganda seizes with delight on every sign of the present difficulties in the international situation in order to prove thereby and proclaim with triumph the bankruptcy of the Teheran-Crimea-Berlin programme. Thus the *Daily Herald* editorial wrote on November 9, underlining the lesson of Bevin's speech:—

> The air is cleared. . . . The smooth communiques of Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam are shown up for what they were worth, which was nothing much.

It is characteristic that some short-sighted and weak-kneed elements on the left fall straight into the trap, and proceed to trumpet forth the same conclusion as a highly radical "revolutionary" conclusion, the ending of illusions, the recognition of fundamental class contradictions, etc. They do not see that thereby they are dancing to the tune of the reactionary campaign*. The conclusion is the contrary. It is now more than ever necessary to fight for the fulfilment of the Teheran-Crimea-Berlin programme and for Three-Power unity, which is the indispensable basis to prevent new world war, to maintain the gains of the democratic victory over fascism, and to ensure the most favourable conditions for working-class advance.

Germany the Key

It would be a mistake to imagine that the present worsening of British-Soviet relations is simply a question of Britain and the Soviet Union. What is really involved is the whole line of policy in Europe, as well as in world affairs. The central question, which is bound up with the fulfilment of the Crimea and Berlin Agreements, is whether the destruction of fascism in Europe is to be carried through, as agreed, or whether Anglo-American reactionary monopoly interests are to be allowed to carry forward their intrigues to break up the anti-fascist popular movements and their governments, restore the fascist and collaborationist upper class gangs, and renew their links with their Nazi monopolist partners for the monopoly

* It is worth noting that the I.L.P., true to form, as in its previous support of Munich, comes out in support of Bevin's foreign policy. In a review of "Labour's First Three Months" Maxton declares in the *New Leader* under the heading, "Foreign Affairs.":—

> In the field of international affairs there is also very widespread interest and, since the collapse of the Foreign Secretaries' meeting, much parliamentary murmuring from some sections against America . . . and from other quarters anti-Russian criticisms. . . .
>
> The positions in Hungary, Rumania and Greece are all subjects of much parliamentary questioning, and there is considerable doubt about British policy in far-off Indonesia.
>
> *It may be said in all fairness that both the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs have handled most of these problems with commonsense and with some regard at least to the general principles of the Labour and socialist movement.*
>
> (*New Leader*, November 9, 1945—italics in the original.)

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domination of Europe. The central field of this issue is Germany and the question of the future of Germany. The flood of humanitarian propaganda now let loose in the British and American press supposedly on behalf of the suffering German people (never on behalf of the German anti-fascists, who are still refused permission by the British authorities even to return to Germany) is the reflection of this reactionary offensive.

"Silent Munich"

"Munich was bad enough; but this silent Munich is more than flesh and blood can bear." This outburst from a British trade union leader recently returned from Germany expressed the situation in a not unjustifiably sharp form. Beneath the thin shell of outer forms of inter-allied co-operation, compliance with the Berlin Agreement, clearing out of Nazis, etc., the effective content of policy in the British, American and French zones is only too often the reverse. In many cases maintenance of former Nazis and prominent supporters of Nazism in leading positions; maintenance of Nazi police to beat up anti-fascists; the soft hand for former Nazis, and the hard hand for anti-fascists and displaced persons; crippling restrictions on anti-fascist organisation; protection of big industrialist interests; dissemination of the most reckless Nazi-inspired anti-communist anti-soviet and anti-Red Army propaganda among the troops—this is the general pattern, which is only exposed in extreme cases, such as the circumstances which compelled the removal of General Patton from control of Bavaria.

Belsen Trial

It is worth taking an example to illustrate the difference in the treatment of Nazis and victims of Nazism in the British zone. Such an example is afforded in striking form by the Belsen and Paderborn trials. The method of procedure at the Belsen trial has outraged public opinion. Forty-four of the worst Nazi torturers and thugs were taken; the trial for nine weeks was turned into a platform for Nazi propaganda denouncing Jews, etc.; a professor of international law was imported to defend the legality of the criminal Nazi system; nor was this only a question of defending counsel; the judge, in summing up, declared, in glaring contradiction to the principles of the Moscow Agreement, that it was no offence to take part in running a Nazi concentration camp, that "we are not here to punish people for beating people, if the conditions were such that there was a justified and reasonable use of force," etc. One-quarter were acquitted; two-thirds of the remainder received only sentences of imprisonment for sending thousands to their death.

And Paderborn

In mitigation, it is pleaded that this procedure, which has sickened public opinion, is only an example of the scrupulous fairness and considerateness of British justice. Is it? In that case, contrast Paderborn. Here also was a mass trial of forty-three persons by a British military court. But the accused this time were no longer Nazis; they were victims of Nazism, displaced persons, Poles who had taken justice into their own hands against their oppressors. Here the leaden-footed British justice suddenly became swift and relentless. There was no indulgent dawdling considerateness here for the defence. In place of nine weeks, the trial was completed in three days, to reach the death sentences. There were no British officers detailed to defend the accused. These Polish victims of Nazism were left to be defended by one Pole who could barely follow the proceedings through inadequate knowledge of English. The Polish Government officially requested admission for its representatives to the trial. The request was

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refused. The contrast of this treatment of Nazis and victims of Nazism expresses the spirit of an administration that would make a mockery of everything for which the common people of Europe fought and gave their lives. It is our responsibility to see that this method of running the occupation is changed. If the Labour Government were to pursue a democratic anti-fascist policy in Germany and Europe, in fulfilment of the Berlin Agreement, this step would do more than anything else to overcome the present difficulties of British-Soviet relations.

The Far East

Similarly a radical revision of policy is necessary in the Far East. The Soviet proposal for a joint allied control of Japan is justified and should be supported by Britain. It is imperative to end the present MacArthur-Hirohito policy, which, under cover of a formal disarmament (not even that in practice) is seeking to preserve the essentials of the old ruling regime in Japan as a bulwark against the democratic advance of the Pacific peoples, just as in China it is assisting with arms and transport the reactionary Kuomintang clique to pursue the aims of anti-democratic civil war. Progressive opinion in America and Britain has been shocked by the use of Japanese troops under Allied command to suppress the national liberation movements of the Asiatic peoples. Now that Japanese military domination has been overthrown, there can be no going back to the old order; the democratic issue in Asia has to be faced today. The old solemn discussions about the "ripeness" of the Asiatic peoples for national independence are out of date; present events are proving this. From India and Ceylon to Burma and Malaya, from Korea and the Philippines to Indo-China and Java, the peoples are in movement, with already a high degree of political consciousness and organisations. Failure to recognise the changed conditions would only involve the Labour Government in a prolonged, extending and shameful war of repression against freedom over one-quarter of the world.

Indonesia

This issue has been brought up sharply by the present war of intervention against the Indonesian Republic. It is of no use to endeavour to hide the plain issue of democratic national rights behind talk of a Japanese-inspired plot; such talk is too transparent hypocrisy from those who have preferred to maintain their rule through the Japanese military organs rather than through the organs of the people; the Indonesian national movement has established its credentials over decades of struggle, equally against the Dutch, against the Japanese and against present aggression; and it is recognised by all observers that it has the full support of the people. Nor is it of use to attempt to throw the responsibility for the policy of violent repressions upon the Dutch rulers; Anglo-Dutch imperialism is far too closely linked in its whole economic structure for such an alibi to be convincing; and the decision of military action has lain with the British Command, acting under the orders of the British Government. The Australian labour movement has been far quicker than ours to respond to this issue. The Indian national movement has expressed its vehement protest at the use of Indian troops to hold down in enslavement a fellow Asiatic nation. The opposition of the seamen has been expressed by the action of the crew of the Moreton Bay. The resentment of British soldiers, enrolled for the war against fascism, at being used for imposing colonial slavery, has been vividly described by the correspondent of the *Daily Herald*. But the decisive responsibility to end this war of intervention and ensure a democratic settlement on the basis of full national rights

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rests with the labour movement of this country.

The Cardinal Choice

Behind all these questions lies the cardinal question of the present stage of British foreign policy. What is to be the future direction of British policy under the Labour Government? Is it to be directed towards building a sectional coalition of reactionary Western imperialism, whether in the shape of the Western European bloc or the Anglo-American Alliance or both, counterposed and with ill-concealed hostility to the Socialist Soviet Union and the rising democratic forces of Europe and Asia? Or is it to be closely aligned with the socialist and rising democratic forces of the world, and on this basis to build world organisation for peace under the guidance of the triple partnership of Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States? This is the cardinal choice of the present phase.

Anglo-American Mirage

Present indications, especially the joint Anglo-American stand leading to the breakdown of the London Conference, Bevin's advocacy of the Western Bloc, and the sectional Attlee-Truman conversations and Attlee-Truman-King Declaration on the Atomic Bomb, point to the former alignment. Churchill's speech in the House of Commons debate on November 7 openly advocated the unconditional Anglo-American Alliance, nor did Bevin's reply suggest disagreement. It is worth noting that Vansittart has come out openly with the demand: "End the Big Three" (*Spectator*, October 5) and couples this with the most violent denunciation of the "power-politics" of "the Kremlin" ("The Baltic States were the hors d'oeuvres. Poland was the entrée. Other courses followed, culminating—so far—in the bombe glacé of the Hungarian Trade Agreement. The banquets of the Kremlin are not stinted"). Labour and democratic opinion will be well advised to think twice before accepting this type of policy. No doubt it would be highly acceptable to the most reactionary sections of British and American finance-capital. It would be disastrous for the British people.

Warning Considerations

On the face of it, it is obvious to any socialist or worker that there must be something wrong if a Labour Government, elected to represent his interests, should find its closest links and affinities with the billionaire dollar imperialists ("we feel so much closer to them") rather than with the Socialist State where the working-class rules. But the most elementary realist considerations equally warn against such a course. There can be no equal partnership of British and American imperialism. The course of the Anglo-American economic negotiations has sufficiently shown that the American imperialists will use their superior economic strength relentlessly to secure the maximum advantage. The imperialist contradictions are such that the association could only be on the basis of subordination and domination, with common interests only in the defence of reaction. The ultimate outcome of such a course would drive towards renewed world war, with Britain as the pawn of American reactionary policy and the cockpit and most vulnerable victim. The Government will be well advised to change its present disastrous line of policy and return to the basis of three-power partnership before it is too late. And the supporters of the Labour Government will need very urgently to sharpen their critical vigilance and increase their pressure in order to ensure that this indispensable change of foreign policy is brought about without delay; for the whole future of the Labour Government and the success of its home programme is bound up with this change.

R. P. D.

November 19, 1945.

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The Indonesian War of Independence

by ARTHUR CLEGG

IN his *Road to Calvary* Alexei Tolstoy writes of 1918: "Who expected that Central Russia, cut off from the seas, from the fertile districts, from the coal and oil, a Russia starving and poverty stricken, burning with the fever of typhus, would not submit, would clench its teeth and again and again send its sons into the fearful battles? A year before, the same men had abandoned the fronts and fled. The country seemed transformed into a chaotic, anarchic swamp—but, in fact, it was not so. Mighty forces of unity emerged in the country and a dream of justice rose above the purely animal instinct of self-preservation."

While in no way attempting to draw a parallel, it is nevertheless worth having this passage in mind when considering recent events in Indonesia, for there, too, a "dream of justice" is awakening millions.

Discerning events only through the inadequate eyes of hostile correspondents, one nevertheless gets glimpses of the mighty forces at work in Indonesia.

In the cold words of *The Times* correspondent (November 10, 1945):

"Certain facts emerge quite clearly. First, the landing of large Dutch forces in Java will provoke mass uprisings. Secondly, the 're-establishment of law and order in Java,' or if one prefers it, 'the reconquest of Java,' will be a major military operation requiring large numbers of trained, equipped, and steady troops and modern machines of war. Thirdly, the Dutch will not have sufficient forces to think of undertaking such an operation on their own until well on into next year. and even then they will require considerable British assistance."

But the correspondent of *The Times*, attempting to be sober, is none the less "optimistic."

For example, Java is not Indonesia, but only one part of it. The Dutch conquest of the islands began in the sixteenth century. It was not concluded till the third quarter of the nineteenth, when the Dutch were still trying to destroy the independent republics of the Chinese gold miners in Borneo. If today the forces of imperialism are better armed than in those days, the same can be said for the Indonesian Army, with the addition that it now faces the invaders as a national army and not just as a series of armed bands of petty princes and potentates.

Concentrating attention on Java, the wealthiest and most populous and politically developed of the islands, correspondents forget that Sumatra, Madura and the Outer Islands stand completely with the Javanese. It is the Indonesians, not the Javanese, who are a nation.

The aim of some sections of Dutch governing circles, with the support of some sections of the British, to create a division between Java and the other islands, will not succeed.

The present Indonesian Prime Minister, Sjarir, and the Minister of the Interior, Sjarifuddin, are both Sumatrans. The Indonesian Governor of Sumatra and the Indonesian armed forces there have both long ago proclaimed their loyalty to the Indonesian Republic.

Similarly with the other islands. Even in Ambon, which the Dutch have long used as the special recruiting ground for their "Indonesian" armed forces and between which island and the rest they have long exerted themselves to sow division, the same process is at work. It is of the utmost importance that in the Government of Premier Sjarir there is an Ambonese minister.

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Therefore those who talk only of Java, and whose military calculations proceed no further than the coasts of that island, merely delude themselves. The reconquest of Indonesia will be a military task of the utmost magnitude, in which the "reconquest of Java" would be not even half the battle.

The Times correspondent writes further of the Indonesian armed forces: "These young Indonesians, aged from 14 to 24, still have not the slightest idea of what modern fighting implies." Other correspondents have been inclined to laugh at the spears and bows and arrows with which some of the Indonesians have been armed.

Yet in north China, when the Japanese invaded, guerilla bands were often formed around a few men with rifles, the rest having only spears. After eight years of war against a modern army numbering up to one million these same guerilla bands, grown into armies, liberated the greater part of north China from Japanese control. Today, the Indonesians have modern arms for at least 100,000 men.

It is the experience of war, and especially of revolutionary wars, that the green enthusiasm of newly-raised forces soon hardens in battle, grows in military experience, develops military leaders and its own suitable tactics, provided only that its vision of justice is sufficiently widespread and powerful.

The Times correspondent also refers to the need for large numbers of steady troops if Indonesia is to be "reconquered." One may legitimately ask, Where will these troops be found?

In Holland? The correspondent admits that the Dutch will not be able to provide any number of them until next year. It is doubtful whether they will be found even then. While there are hot-headed elements in Holland who care nothing for the reconstruction of their country and the immense jobs to be done to remove the last traces of the Nazi occupation, that is not the mood of the great majority of people. The people of the Netherlands, by and large, are thinking of improving conditions of life there, not of fresh and costly foreign wars. Nor are the reports of desertions from Dutch forces now on their way to the Far East without foundation and significance.

As for the British soldiers, their feeling has been summed up by the *Daily Herald* correspondent in Batavia. He wrote: "The average British soldier wonders what it is all about. His view, rather naturally, is this:—

"'We've had six years of our own war; why the hell can't we keep out of this mess? Why not let the Dutch and the Indonesians fight it out between themselves?'

"He is afraid that this turn out to be a repetition of the Greek business, although he is assured officially that we are not here for political reasons.

"Explanations of this sort do not placate a man who has served for three or four years overseas, and is due for repatriation or release, when he may have his head blown off any moment in a fight which he thinks does not concern him."

Thus for official policy, both British and Dutch, between the desire and the deed there are many stumbling blocks.

Undoubtedly, ruling circles in both Britain and Holland underestimated the strength of national feeling and also the power of national movements in the Far East. That military and political contempt of Eastern peoples, which has lost all meaning in the modern world, has led them into a position from which there is no way but retreat, and retreat is what they are most loath to do.

They imagined that a few reassuring remarks plus a show of force would be all that was required to reduce nations to their ancient subjection—and they made a major political mistake.

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Undoubtedly, too, they miscalculated the depth of democratic feeling in such countries as Australia, Britain and Holland that has its finest expression in the deeds of the Australian dockers. The days are past when the common man of such countries considers democracy as something only for himself and not for his fellow-workers of another colour.

The miscalculations, and the gap between the desire and the deed, largely explain the contradictions and the vacillations in British policy, and the odd relationship between the Netherlands Government and its representative on the spot, the "Lieutenant-Governor of the Netherlands East Indies," Dr. van Mook.

First we learnt from Mr. Attlee that the speech of Mr. Lawson, Secretary of State for War, reported in the *Daily Herald*, in which he told British soldiers serving in the Far East that they would not be required to fight for the French in Indo-China and the Dutch in Indonesia, had not, in fact, been made.

Then we were told that the speech of General Christison, in which he promised co-operation with the Indonesian authorities on landing in Java had been badly reported.

Then, whenever Dr. van Mook suggested meeting the Indonesian President, Soekarno, the Netherlands Government repudiated the statement, without, however, venturing to recall van Mook. Having done this once or twice, they suddenly issued a statement saying that Dr. van Mook had reported to them and was carrying out their policy!

With such political contortions in Britain and Holland can be contrasted the steady expansion of authority of the Indonesian Government.

Owing its origin to the Declaration of Independence issued by Soekarno and Hatta on August 17, two days after the Japanese surrender, a fairly representative government was soon formed and preparations were made for holding a National Convention of representatives from all Indonesia which met in October, approved the formation of the Republic and adopted a democratic programme, called for elections and social and economic reforms. The National Convention made it clear that Indonesia desired friendly political and economic relations with such countries as Britain, the United States, the Soviet Union, China, Holland and Australia, that it welcomed the formation of the United Nations Organisation and desired a place in it. Its demands were reasonable and moderate, but they were firm.

The Convention elected a National Committee and a Working Committee to act on these policies and the chairman of the Working Committee, Sjarir, on November 13 became the Prime Minister and formed a new Cabinet. While Soekarno remains President and Hatta Vice-President, their positions are now more honorary, while effective leadership of the movement is in the hands of the new Cabinet.

As has been pointed out, this Cabinet is representative of all sections of Indonesia, and that is one of its great sources of strength. Equally important, Sjarir and Sjarifuddin both have excellent records of anti-Japanese resistance, as have other Ministers. Both, too, are Socialists and leaders of the Indonesian Socialist Party, now the largest party in Indonesia. Sjarifuddin, well known as a Socialist in the years before the war, was one of the three Indonesian leaders who united all sections of the national movement in 1939 when the movement was beginning to recover from earlier crushing blows struck at it by the Dutch.

The leaders have thus experience in politics and in uniting diverse trends. In addition, they and Soekarno have

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been touring the villages of Java and are assured of the utmost support.

Thus the picture from Indonesia is one of firm and developing policy and growing strength.

Naturally, hostile correspondents, seeking to justify the efforts of foreign powers to destroy the new Republic, conduct a propaganda campaign against it. Just as the tale of Japanese direction was invented (and later had to be officially denied, e.g., Lawson, Secretary of State for War, in House of Commons, November 11, 1945: "There is no direct evidence that the present disturbances in Java have been started by the Japanese.") so now tales of "wild extremists," uncontrollable by the Sjarir Government, are being invented. Naturally Dutch and British provocateurs are trying to divide the national movement; equally naturally sections of that movement, through inexperience, make mistakes. But the essential thing is that here are 75 million people on the move, a people nearly twice as numerous as the British. To write the history of their strivings in terms of "extremists" is to indulge in self-delusion and cheap propaganda which is as false as Goebbels' tales of wartime Britain.

Nor is there today hope of starving Java out. In the past Java was a large food importer. Under the Japanese the great rubber and other plantations were largely a liability and it became necessary for the peasants to grow food instead. Today, therefore, Java and the other islands are more self-supporting in food than at any time in the last fifty years.

Ranged against the vital and forward-looking forces of Indonesia there are two governments willing to wound but, if not afraid to strike, at least uncertain, despite their desire to destroy the Indonesian Republic, as to the wisdom of bearing the burden of full-scale involvement on their own shoulders. Each, too, is bent upon its private gain.

For Britain the naval base of Sourabaya occupies a central point in the plans of power politics of ruling circles. But can such plots succeed? And even if Sourabaya falls to British arms can it be held?

Ultimately only one force stands in the way of Indonesian democracy: the great trusts, the big monopolies, the Anglo-Dutch Shell Oil Company, the Unilever Combine, the tin and rubber companies. These are the real extremists who are frustrating a peaceful settlement.

The mass of mankind, desiring peace and prosperity, as do the Indonesians, realising that democracy, like peace, is indivisible, stands behind the Charter of the United Nations Organisation declaring that "All members shall refrain from the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations," the second of which is "To develop friendly relations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples."

Those words are unambiguous, and Britain cannot afford to ignore them. The fight of the Indonesian people *is* the fight of the United Nations for prosperity, democracy and peace.

Recognition of, and co-operation with, the Indonesian Republic and its Government is the sole way in which "law and order," to which Bevin so frequently refers, can be established.

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Cotton Working Party

by MARGOT HEINEMANN

THE urgent need for the Labour Government to increase the efficiency in British industry has been sharply brought home by the Lend-Lease difficulties (see Maurice Dobb's article in LABOUR MONTHLY for October, 1945). Special interest is therefore centred on the methods by which the Government is attacking the problem in cotton textiles—probably the most inefficient of all our major industries, and one of the most important for exports.

The intention of the Board of Trade to set up a "Working Party" for the cotton textile industry was announced by Sir Stafford Cripps at Manchester on September 9. The Party was to be composed of four representatives each from employers and trade unions, nominated by the Board of Trade from panels presented by the respective organisations, four independent experts (engineers, scientists, economists, etc.) and a chairman appointed by the Board of Trade.*

The terms of reference of the Working Party (and of all other Working Parties which may be set up) were given by Sir Stafford Cripps in the House on October 15, 1945:—

To examine and inquire into the various schemes and suggestions put forward for improvements of organisation, production and distribution methods and processes in the industry, and to report as to the steps which should be taken in the national interest to strengthen the industry and render it more stable and more capable of meeting competition in the home and foreign markets.

Working parties have already been set up for four other industries—pottery, hosiery, furniture, and boot and shoe—and Sir Stafford made it clear, at a press conference on October 15, that his intention is to set up similar bodies in all other industries except those which are scheduled for nationalisation or which do not come under the Board of Trade.

The cotton employers gave at first an extremely hostile reception to the plan. The Central Committee of the Cotton Spinners' and Manufacturers' Association issued a statement on on September 14 setting out their reasons:—

This proposal implies a substitution of a new committee of a different structure in place of the Cotton Board and the Post-war Development Committee which represent the industry as a whole and which have already produced collective plans for reorganisation.

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* The members of the cotton Working Party are as follows:—

Chairman: Sir George Schuster, Director of The Westminster Bank, and Southern Railway and chairman of Home and Colonial Stores.

Employers' representatives: *C. B. Clegg*, Director of a spinning and manufacturing firm and chairman of a sub-committee of the Cotton Spinners' and Manufacturers' Association, which recently issued a report on a new wages system for weavers. *R. C. Reynolds*, managing director of the Bleachers' Association. *A. V. Symons*, director of Tootal, Broadhurst, Lee and the merchant member of the Cotton Board. *W. M. Wiggins*, president for ten years of the Spinners' Federation.

Trade Union representatives: T. Griffin, finishing trades. *A. Knowles*, chairman of the Amalgamated Association of Spinners and Twiners, member of the Evershed Commission on cotton wages and of the Cotton Board. *A. Naesmith*, general secretary of the Amalgamated Weavers' Association, member of the Platt Mission and of the Cotton Board. *A. Roberts*, secretary of the Amalgamated Association of Card, Blowing and Ring Room Operatives, member of the Evershed Commission and the Platt Mission.

Independent members: Sir R. Dobson, engineer. *Prof. E. L. Hirst*, scientist. *Prof. T. Jewkes*, economist. *Miss A. G. Shaw*, factory organisation.

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We see no reason for departing from a structure which has served the industry excellently and which could deal effectively with the objectives which the President has in mind.

The point of this objection is, of course, that the Cotton Board, with a total membership of 12, has only three workers' representatives and one independent member: the rest are employers. The employers were hoping that this body itself would receive statutory and price-fixing powers.

The most violent objections have come from the spinning employers who presented a memorandum to Sir Stafford Cripps claiming first that:—

The cotton industry will have no difficulty in returning to its full capacity to serve home and export trade as soon as the labour which was taken from it for war purposes has returned to the cotton towns;

and secondly that:—

We emphatically repudiate the charge that management in our industry has been inefficient . . . the Lancashire cotton spinning industry is among the most efficent industries in this country.

The workers' organisations, on the other hand, have given a clear and unequivocal welcome to the scheme. The Legislative Council of the United Textile Factory Workers' Association on September 24 passed a resolution welcoming the plan and

assuring the President of the Board of Trade of its support and co-operation in carrying out his proposals for the reorganisation of the cotton industry.

The opposition of the employers has cooled off a little since the names of the independent members were announced: "we did not know, at first, of course, who they would be," said the chairman of the Manufacturers' Association (*Manchester Guardian*, October 1, 1945).

There has, also, been more of a welcome in the capitalist press as a whole since Sir Stafford Cripps's speech at Stoke on October 4. He said there that Working Parties were:—

a device extensively used during the war to advise upon a particular subject matter, and after giving its advice it ceases to exist. It does not perpetuate itself as a committee is liable to do, and that is what we want in this case—a body to do the job and then dissolve.

This seems to represent some change from the plan, as first set out. On September 9, according to *The Times*, Sir Stafford said of the Working Parties:—

When their reports had been received and studied by the Department, they (i.e., the Department) would have to lay down the minimum requirements placed upon the industry in the national interest, and then it would be for the partnership to see that those requirements were carried into effect.

So the employers still hope.

The basic facts about the industry's backwardness, small-scale working, and consequent loss of export markets have often been discussed (the unions issued an excellent report analysing them in October, 1943). The most recent and striking exposure was that made by the Platt Mission (including employers and T.U. representatives and led by a former chairman of the Lancashire Cotton Corporation) which went to study the United States industry on behalf of the Government in March-April, 1944. Its report showed that production per worker per hour worked in the American industry was more than double the figure in Britain.* The difference was greater

*The weighted comparison for the whole industry: as worked out on the basis of figures given in the Platt report by the statistician L. Rostas, is given in the *Economic Journal* (June-September, 1945):—

	Output per man-hour	
	U.K.	*U.S.A.*
Spinning	 100	161-5
Weaving	 100	261-70
Whole industry...	 100	211-20

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in weaving than in spinning, and in the weaving of yarns of medium counts the American workers' output per hour was three times the British.

The reasons for the disparity were clearly brought out. In U.S.A. the cotton industry is based on mass-production, automatic looms and high-speed spinning and yarn-preparing machinery, the whole process being carried through in a single production unit which may also include finishing. To enable the automatic looms to work economically there must be large scale orders and standardisation; and U.S. merchanting and distributing is concentrated in some fifty firms. Managers are young and up-to-date technically.

In Britain the plant is both old and out-of-date—only five new spinning mills have been built in Lancashire in the last twenty-five years. Each process (e.g., spinning and weaving) is carried on in a separate production unit. Standardisation is almost non-existent. There are no less than 1,200 merchant firms, and this makes for small, varied orders and short runs to suit a particular customer's requirements. The looms are still 95 per cent. non-automatic Lancashire looms, which depend on the concentrated attention of the weaver, and can compete in world markets at all only if there is a large, highly-skilled and very cheap labour force to work them. Owing to the bad conditions, there is now an acute shortage of such labour.

The conditions for the workers are, in general, far better in U.S. mills, though shifts are worked. There is more space, light and air, much less noise, and dangerous overhead belting is cut out by electric machinery. Though the output is so much higher, the work is almost certainly less hard. Wages are very much higher in the U.S.A.—for the lowest wage-earning groups they run from 26-32 dollars a week in 1944, while the *average* adult earnings in Britain in January, 1945, were only 98s. 1d. for men and 56s. 8d. for women, and the total average 66s. 10d. More adult men are employed in U.S.A., and far less juvenile labour, so that there are fewer "blind-alley" jobs.

It is clear from these facts that the reorganisation needed is not just a matter of ordering a certain number of new-type machines, but of changing the whole structure of the industry. If automatic machinery is to succeed, the orders must be large-scale bulk orders. That means that merchanting methods and policy must be changed, and there will have to be a much closer link-up, if not actual amalgamation, between spinners and weavers. The old mills of Lancashire cannot in many cases physically find room for the new types of machinery—the big aircraft assembly plants set up there in the war years would probably be much more suitable and healthier. This means that large-scale working — whether by grouping or amalgamation of existing firms—is essential.

The Lancashire employers on the whole have opposed any such drastic reorganisation. They have claimed that Lancashire's special place in the export markets depended on "speciality" goods made to the customer's individual requirements, and that it is hopeless to compete in bulk production lines. This attitude merely reflects the fact that, owing to the inefficiency of the basic processes, Lancashire had been driven out of the mass markets. Moreover, mass-production spinning and weaving can be combined with any variety needed in finishing. It is difficult to believe that the American public is less "choosey" than the British, or even the West African, as to the quality of its cotton goods.

The trouble is that effective reorganisation is bound to tread on the toes of a lot of the employers. All are looking forward to, at any rate, a brief

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post-war boom, in which fortunes could be made. As regards the longer-term outlook, before the war they were experimenting with various semi-official and Government reorganisation schemes, all of which basically involved the big firms buying up "redundant" plant and closing it down, so as to maintain profits on what remained, rather than re-equipping the industry on modern lines. They were at the same time endeavouring to get statutory powers to fix minimum prices, and were on the verge of doing so under the Cotton Industry Act, 1939 (which never operated owing to the outbreak of war). These prices the employers were no doubt hoping to fix at a level that would allow the less efficient firms to carry on and yield a monopoly profit to the larger. Their post-war policy statements showed that they were still thinking on these lines.

Real reorganisation, however, can only be carried out if the new efficient machinery is allowed to produce at cheap prices—the new mills must not be saddled with heavy fixed charges for buying up the obsolete ones. If any compensation is to be paid for closed mills, it must be in a share of the ordinary capital of the new ones. The vested interests of merchants must give way to central planning of orders and standardisation under Government control (such as existed under the war-time "utility" scheme). The sleepiness of many of the present managerial staffs must be overcome by the Government fixing maximum prices and output targets, and the training of new technicians largely from the ranks of the younger cotton workers.

Even more sweeping changes are needed in workers' wages and conditions. The labour force and output in spinning and weaving in June, 1945, was a little over half that of 1937—a difference of 170,000 workers. Though a few have returned since that date, spinning is still 70,000 short of its pre-war labour force. But former cotton workers, after their wartime experiences in the Forces and war industries, are not prepared to come back to the pre-war cotton industry with its low wage rates, short-time working and under-employment, and its old, crowded mills lacking welfare facilities, canteens, and so on.

Already it has been necessary during the war to make some improvements, in order to apply the E.W.O. and direct workers to the mills. For the first time a minimum "fall-back" wage and guarantee against stopped looms has been established for weavers, and there have been a series of increases in wage rates.

But this is only a small beginning. Rates are still very low, especially in relation to the high skill required. The minimum "fall-back" wage for weavers or warpers is only 59s.; the hourly earnings—piecework, overtime and all—averaged just under 2s. for men and 1s. 3d. for women in January, 1945. The whole wage structure, based on standardised piece-price lists dating back for many years, and still unrelated (in spinning, at least) to a basic time rate, assumes the continuation of the traditional methods of work. Moves for increased productivity will be successful only if a wages structure can be devised which will allow the worker to benefit considerably from the new methods. A special Commission (the Evershed Commission) is now working out proposals for this. Meanwhile, further wage increases must be made at once (the weavers, for instance, are now asking for a further 7½ per cent.) even if this necessitates temporary Government financial intervention, as did the establishment of the £5 minimum underground in the mines.

In some quarters, even in the labour movement, the Working Party plan

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has been attacked as "yet another delaying enquiry." This need not be true. The job of the Working Party, and above all of the trade unions within it, is to present, not another generalised survey, but practical immediate proposals for implementing the best of the general technical principles laid down in the Platt and other reports. It must show the Board of Trade what practical steps will be taken to produce immediate cloth requirements, how much new investment is actually being made or proposed, what type of machine is now being put in, what new factories are being erected, and what prices are likely to be. It must say what is going to be done to secure standardisation and bulk orders, in both home and export markets. It must show exactly how new workers are to be attracted and trained, and if two shifts are to be worked, what corresponding benefit the workers will get out of it. If it fails to produce a satisfactory set-up, the Government will have to resort to more drastic action.

But there is no reason why it *should* fail, once the employers are convinced that the Labour Government means business and that the old lines of solution will not be accepted. It will be, above all, the trade union representatives who are responsible for seeing that a bold, imaginative approach is made, and that at long last the workers' interests shall come before those of the mill speculator or the monopoly combine.

The Meaning of the Docks Dispute

by NORAH BROWN

"*It will be necessary to resist the reactionary offensive which seeks to exploit the difficulties of the present economic position in order to put through policies for lowering real wages and social standards and cutting down programmes of social reform. This type of proposed solution would only lead to the same disastrous consequences as after the last war.*"

Draft Resolution on Transition from War to Peace, *XVIII Congress, Communist Party.*

SINCE negotiations are still in progress as it is written, this article cannot attempt to discuss the extent to which the dockers' claims may be met, nor foretell the future course of events in the industry. Hitherto the employers appear to be stubbornly maintaining their obstructive tactics and inviting further trouble.

The Legacy of the Past

Very low wages and the curse of casual labour persisted on the docks even after the last war. The day wage rate which the unions in 1920 had forced up to 16s. had dropped to as low as 10s. again by 1923. In 1939 it still stood at only 13s. An additional shilling was negotiated just prior to the outbreak of war, and the only subsequent increases have been 1s. in July, 1940, and a second 1s. in March, 1944, which finally brought the men back to their 1920 level. These wartime increases, totalling 11s. a week, make a poor showing as compared with the 24s. to 28s. secured in most other industries.

The Shaw Award in 1920 strongly recommended a scheme for decasualisation, but the employers were able to safeguard their "reserve army" so effectively that "Three on the Hook and Three on the Book" still constituted the dockers' normal week, until the Essential Works Order was applied to the industry in 1940. Thereupon the Ministry of War Transport scheme (in the North-Western

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and Clydeside ports) and subsequently the Dock Labour Corporation Scheme in the other major ports (but not in Northern Ireland) brought the guaranteed week into the industry for the first time. The failure of the pre-war registration schemes was clearly shown by an investigation conducted on Merseyside in 1930, which revealed that 18.5 per cent. of tally-holders received no work during the whole of the thirteen weeks of the inquiry, 22.2 per cent. received none during from four to nine weeks, and only 32.6 per cent. (or less than a third of the men) had even a single call-on in each week of the period*.

No wonder that dockers in the armed forces, as they embarked for the Second Front in 1944, should have demanded to know: "Are we coming back to the dole, Ernie?" as they sighted the Minister of Labour, the man who had fought for their security in the past.

The press and the employers have been very ready to focus attention on the high wages earned by sections of the men during the war. Their heroism in facing the exceptional dangers involved in carrying through their work in blitz and blackout is no longer applauded. The hardships and discomforts imposed on them by the transfer scheme; their sacrifice of past privileges, of cherished practices and of safety regulations; the harsh and arbitrary treatment frequently meted out by port officials—on these things the press has been silent. Nevertheless, in spite of conditions at times almost unbearable, the dockers' war-time record is second to none. During the weeks preceding D-Day, thousands of men established records of output, speed and endurance over incredibly long hours, so that every ship should be fully laden on schedule.

* Report of Enquiry into Casual Labour in the Merseyside Area, F. G. Hanham.

After VE-Day

It has to be stated that while the unions were fully alive to the importance of securing a permanent decasualisation scheme, they failed to appreciate in time the necessity to fight simultaneously for a substantial increase in the base rates before the wartime conditions and piece prices came to an end, although this demand had been coming from the various ports with increasing force for many months. Hence the ending of the war faced the men with the prospect of a big fall in earnings, while the employers' continued refusal even to discuss decasualisation, gave good grounds for believing that they would have to fight and fight hard, if they were not to be forced back to the insecurity and low living standards of their miserable pre-war existence.

It was this vision of 1939 on the horizon that led to the local stoppages in port after port throughout the spring and summer of this year, culminating in the prolonged London dispute during June and July which followed the termination of the Western Front Agreement.

It was already known by then that the Government was prepared if necessary to impose a decasualisation scheme upon the employers, so that there were no longer grounds on that score for any hesitation in presenting the claim for the wage increase and improved conditions so urgently required. An entirely new approach by the Unions was called for. The men were no longer concerned to secure an extra shilling or two to lessen the gap between wages and rising prices. They saw that the time had arrived to stake their claim in the post-war world.

But the trade union machine still ticked over quietly at its normal pace. In due course a full national conference of the four unions concerned was held on August 24, and here the

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delegates, coming direct from the branches, did express their determination to secure at least minimum standards of wages, security and leisure and embodied their claims in a Dockers' Charter. Such a Charter required to be handled in an entirely new way; and called for the maximum publicity and a nation-wide campaign in the ports. But the machinery just went on ticking over; the National Joint Council did not meet until five weeks later (September 27) and the employers were then allowed a further three weeks in which to consider their reply to the strongly argued case put forward by Mr. Donovan.

The position had thus been reached when the Charter that embodied the full demands voiced by the men was actually awaiting the employers' answer at the time that the strike broke out.

How it Began

The immediate cause of the dispute—a claim for a special rate for handling pit-props—affected only 61 men employed by a single firm at Birkenhead. The firm was non-federated and held no agreements with the union, and when settlement was delayed, other men came out in support, including a number on transfer from Liverpool. The latter were sent back to their own Control, where they were refused both their books and their attendance money by the Port Labour Management, who then proceeded to extend the trouble still further by directing men from other control points to the affected areas. These actions changed the whole character of the dispute, and allowed certain individuals (mostly without previous records of trade union activity) to step into the forefront. Tactics which had been attempted during the London dispute were adopted, and the Merseyside men, having been forced on strike in the first place by the action of the employers and the administration, found themselves in the van of what rapidly became an almost nation-wide stoppage, around the very programme already under negotiation between the unions and the employers.

The unions must accept a measure of responsibility for this development. Had the dockers seen that vigorous counter-measures against the employers' attacks were in hand, they would not have felt thrown back entirely upon their own resources, and compelled to take action into their own hands. The very bitterness of the feeling displayed towards their officials indicates the extent to which they felt they had been left in the lurch.

The National Stoppage

But both the unions and the Ministry of Labour appear to have been slow to recognise the dangerous character of the situation, which warranted the immediate calling together of the Joint Council so as to get the claim settled without delay. The vast majority of the men on strike did not realise that their claims had already been presented by the unions. Formal calls to "resume work and allow the negotiating machinery to take its course" were seen only as proof of a complete divorce in policy between officers and members, and increased the conviction, sincerely held by thousands, that their only hope lay in direct action.

By the time the National Joint Council did meet (on October 18) splits and disruption in the unions seemed not impossible, and the employers took the fullest advantage of the situation. They met the unions with a blank refusal of any wage increase, with attacks on long-standing overtime rates, and offered in place of a decasualisation scheme proposals calculated to arouse the maximum suspicion, anger and indignation. Having presented their "offer," for which they took care to secure the widest publicity, they broke off the negotia-

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tions on the grounds that the constitution had been violated by the men on strike, and thus successfully prevented the unions from referring the dispute to the Ministry of Labour.

During the three weeks that followed, the strike extended in spite of all efforts made by the unions to get a return to work and in spite of the deadlock which had clearly been reached. Of the 40,000 men involved, many were out for six weeks.

The resoluteness, solidarity and discipline of the strikers were outstanding, and showed the strength of their determination not to be driven back to the conditions of 1939.

It can be but seldom that a strike of this magnitude and duration, carried through with no backing from the men's own organisations, has been ended by a simultaneous return to work in all ports. It is true that the Strike Committees staved off the decision to the latest possible moment, when the trade union ballot votes on the Mersey and in Manchester were already showing an overwhelming majority in favour. But they maintained their control of the situation to the end, and it was on their instructions, not as a result of the ballot, that the men returned on November 5. The Committee announced that they were doing so in order that negotiations could be immediately resumed, and on the understanding that the Government would intervene in the event of a breakdown, and that the strike would be resumed if their demands had not been met within thirty days.

* * *

What is the outstanding characteristic of the situation in industry today? What in essence are the workers as a whole striving to avoid and striving to achieve?

They realise the desperate position in which they would be placed were the attempts of the employers to force them back on to their pre-war standards to succeed. The Government, indeed, has quite clearly indicated the necessity to achieve radical improvements in wages rates, conditions and amenities if man-power is to be tempted back to such essential consumer industries as textiles, clothing and distribution, and this appears to have received general recognition. But the problem involves all trades.

Examined industry by industry, it is clear that the workers are concerned to secure an adequate guaranteed minimum wage that allows them to house, feed and clothe themselves and their families like human beings; to shorten their hours of toil in view of the intensification of work and pace of output demanded by present-day conditions and to obtain a modicum of leisure for rest, recreation and cultural pursuits; for paid holidays so that for at least two weeks of the year they can enjoy freedom from the tyranny of work; for security in sickness & old age.

But these claims are being advanced with a determination no less than that of the dockers, by railwaymen, building workers, engineers, distributive and clothing workers—in varying forms in almost every industry, but with the same theme throughout. The workers are not going back to 1939. They have defeated fascism abroad and Tory reaction at home. They have returned a Labour Government to power, and they intend to see results.

This mood is not evident only in well-organised trades, but among all sections. An advance along the whole front must be prepared and directed, and the labour movement must adapt itself to this task, recognising that only the closest co-operation between the workers, the trade unions and the Labour Government can guarantee the carrying through of Labour's programme, and avoid the outbreak of guerilla warfare which would retard the drive for post-war reconstruction.

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The economic recovery of Britain itself demands the satisfaction of the workers' claims. The T.U.C. has recognised that the maintenance of a high level of spending power in the hands of the people is necessary for the successful conversion of our economy and the rapid stepping-up of our productive capacity, as well as for the maintenance of full employment. There need be no "embarrassment" for the Labour Government in the vigorous pressing of the workers' demands, and the Government should itself at once make clear its understanding of this fact. The workers are entitled to expect its full support against the employing class.

The trade unions must put themselves at the head of this move forwards. They must find ways to cut out the procrastination and long-drawn-out procedure characteristic of the negotiating machinery in most industries to-day. They must be prepared to pursue new policies that correspond to the requirements of their membership, and must find new and effective ways of ensuring that the membership is kept fully and continuously informed on all questions, so that close contact is maintained. The divisions between unions catering for workers in the same industry must be overcome, so that the maximum unity can be developed in relation to the employers.

Where inner union democracy has ceased to exist in fact, however clearly it may exist in rule books, the necessary overhauling and reorganisation of branch life must be carried through to ensure that it corresponds to present-day requirements.

Unless these things can be done without delay; unless the unions can face up to the urgent requirements of the movement today, a dangerous situation may easily arise—and involve far more than the docks. If the trade unions and the Labour Government are clear-sighted and politically alert, they can ensure that the rising tide of working-class struggle strengthens the whole position of the Government and knits it indissolubly with the trade union movement.

Course of the Industrial Cycle after the War

(From *World Economy and World Politics*, Moscow, May, 1945).

by E. VARGA

THE end of the war in Europe makes the question of the course of economic life in the capitalist world a very actual one. What is the prospect for the immediate future, or to speak more exactly, what will be the movement of the first industrial cycle after the war?

It would be too risky to attempt to forecast already now the course of this cycle, all the more because the lack of statistical material prevents any accurate judgment even on the present economic situation. Nevertheless, the Marxist method and understanding of the economic situation which existed after the end of the first world war, and also such statistics as are available about the economy of the U.S.A.—that decisive factor in world capitalist economy—make possible a scientific analysis of the problem and an indication of the general lines of the industrial cycle following on the war. Obviously it would be wrong to believe that after this war what happened following on the last war will be quite simply repeated. There are quite important differences between the situation in that period and now. We shall

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deal with these differences in detail below.

By way of a starting point, we can use the fact that every world war breaks the course of the industrial cycle, suspends the cyclical features of the productive process during the period of the war and brings about a phase of "boom of a special kind." This results from the distortion of the economy under the influence of the war. In peace-time the most difficult problem for capital is the question of the realisation of the value of commodities, how to pass over from the commodity form to the money form of capital. The problems of realisation, or to put it in another way, the problems of the market, do not exist in war time. The military needs far exceed the productive possibilities which have remained unused in peace-time as the result of the lack of markets. In the present war, the Government appears on the market as a buyer with unlimited purchasing power. Under war conditions, the capitalist has to worry, not about the sale of his products, but about how to transform the capital which he has in money form into productive capital. He has to strive to replace the elements of productive capital: labour power, raw materials, means of production and transport. It is not the consumers' demand that sets limits to capitalist production, as is the case in time of peace, but on the contrary, the insufficient production sets limits both to the productive and to the unproductive demand of the civilian population.

The longer the war continues, the greater the extent to which the consumers' demands of society exceed its productive capacity. The values used up, that is, the productive capital which is not renewed in this form, sits idle in the bank in the form of money capital, since the productive capital is unable to renew its form as a result of the shortage of raw materials, machinery, buildings and labour power. The same takes place with that portion of the profit which is destined for accumulation. The income of workers, employees, officials and officers cannot be fully spent owing to the shortage of consumers' goods and the balance, therefore, for the most part sits idle in various savings funds.

All these immense sums of accumulated consumers' demands await the end of the war, and after the removal of Government restrictions will rush with full force into the commodity markets.

Thus all the prerequisites are present, after the ending of the war and a short period of difficulties in passing over from war to peace, for the beginning of the ascending phase in a new industrial cycle. This was the case after the first world war, but the period of rising production was extremely short. Indices of industrial production show that the highest point was reached in the U.S.A. in March, 1920, in Britain in the first quarter of 1920 and in France in November, 1920. Thus in the two most decisive capitalist countries, the U.S.A. and Britain, the rise of production after the end of the war lasted only about fifteen months.

As for the countries of Continental Europe, with the exception of the neutral countries, all of them were so impoverished (in real terms) as a result of the war, that the effect of accumulated consumers' demands in the form of banking deposits and savings and partly also in cash, did not lead to a rise in production, but to inflation. There was an effective demand for goods, but production could increase only very slowly because in these countries the material elements of production were lacking—the raw materials, machinery and transport. At that time we characterised the economic situation of those countries as a

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By way of a starting point, we can use the fact that every world war breaks the course of the industrial cycle, suspends the cyclical features of the productive process during the period of the war and brings about a phase of "boom of a special kind." This results from the distortion of the economy under the influence of the war. In peace-time the most difficult problem for capital is the question of the realisation of the value of commodities, how to pass over from the commodity form to the money form of capital. The problems of realisation, or to put it in another way, the problems of the market, do not exist in war time. The military needs far exceed the productive possibilities which have remained unused in peace-time as the result of the lack of markets. In the present war, the Government appears on the market as a buyer with unlimited purchasing power. Under war conditions, the capitalist has to worry, not about the sale of his products, but about how to transform the capital which he has in money form into productive capital. He has to strive to replace the elements of productive capital: labour power, raw materials, means of production and transport. It is not the consumers' demand that sets limits to capitalist production, as is the case in time of peace, but on the contrary, the insufficient production sets limits both to the productive and to the unproductive demand of the civilian population.

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crisis of under-production, having in view the fact that the low level of production was not the result of over-production and insufficient demand for goods, as is the case with the "normal" crises of over-production. It was due to a shortage of means of production, that is, to the impoverishment of those countries.

Statistics also show that in the course of the brief rise of the productive cycle after the war, nowhere in Europe, as distinct from the U.S.A., did production reach the pre-war level. This level was only reached some years after the 1920 crisis—in France in 1924, in Germany 1927, England only in 1929, that is, immediately before the new world crisis of 1929-1933. This means that after the end of the last war, the chief European countries needed six, nine and eleven years before their industrial production reached the pre-war level.

The index of wholesale prices after the last war shows that the highest level was reached in the U.S.A. in January, 1920, and in Britain in March, 1920. But what is of even greater significance is the fact that during the 1920-21 crisis, although prices fell sharply they did not drop to the 1913 level; and this in spite of the fact that there can be no doubt that the rising productivity of labour lowered the value of products of the same quality (that is, the social labour time embodied in them). The level of prices should have fallen below the level of 1913, but the strength of monopoly and the fact that the war resulted in a piling up of overheads on production (taxes, rents, transport costs, and so on) maintained market prices at a far higher level than before the war. And it was only in the crisis of 1929-33 that prices fell in accordance with the fall in value, that is, to such an extent that they fell even below the level of 1913. The artificial maintenance of a high level of prices through the 1920-21 crisis undoubtedly contributed towards the depth and sharpness of the crisis of 1929-33.

If we compare the economic consequences of the second world war so far as the capitalist world is concerned, with the consequences of the first world war, we can say with full assurance that at the end of the present war the distortion of economy in the capitalist world will be much greater than in 1918.

Although the 1914-18 war was also a world war, it was in great measure a European war so far as its direct effects were concerned. In the case of this war, the impoverishment of the capitalist world as a whole will be much greater than it was then.

Moreover, the difference in the economic situation of those countries which did not become a theatre of war operations, as compared with those which did, will be much greater. The economic situation in those countries not directly involved—in the first place the U.S.A. and the British Dominions, and to some extent also Britain, South American countries and the European neutrals—will be in sharp contrast with the economic situation of the capitalist countries over-run by Germany in Europe, which will be absolutely impoverished, short of everything and involved in a complete collapse of their economy. On the other hand, the U.S.A., also Canada, South Africa, etc., will come out of the war with their productive apparatus much increased and improved, while in the countries of continental Europe ravaged by the war the means of production will, for the most part, have been worn out or destroyed and their towns and transport systems greatly damaged. For this reason, shortly after the end of the war the countries of the first group will be "countries of over-production" while in the ravaged countries, as after the first world war, there will be " a crisis

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of under-production.'' But the territory covered by this second group will be much greater than it was after the first world war. In the countries of Eastern Europe allied with the Soviet Union, this crisis of under-production will not be so sharp thanks to their closer economic relations with the Soviet Union.

Britain will occupy a kind of intermediate position. Although it was not a theatre of war operations, there was considerable material loss as a result of air attacks. During the war it spent or lost a considerable part of its overseas investments and will come out of the war with a far higher indebtedness to its Dominions and Colonies. According to the practically unanimous estimates of British economists, it will be necessary for Britain after the war to increase its exports by 50 per cent. as compared with pre-war, in order to import the food and raw materials it needs to restore the pre-war standard of living. In order to guarantee this, Britain will have to carry out a very flexible economic policy.

The existence in the U.S.A. of a greater and more efficient productive apparatus and of a ''deferred'' demand of some fifty milliard dollars, will undoubtedly produce in the U.S.A. a short-lived prosperity, just as after the first world war. This demand will in the first place be directed towards consumers' goods of secondary necessity, such as automobiles, refrigerators, television sets, furniture, houses, etc., the production of which during the war was either prohibited or very much restricted. The demand for goods of prime necessity such as food, clothing and shoes will be only slightly in excess of normal, as production of these during the war was very little affected. On the other hand, the demand for means of production will in all probability be *lower* than before the war owing to the great extension of the productive apparatus during the war. . . .

For a correct judgment about the future course of the industrial cycle, we must also take into account the rise in the productivity of labour as a result of the technical improvements carried out during the war. The fact that industries no longer had to worry about markets and were being pressed to satisfy the needs of the war, led to a great number of technical innovations, some of which were already known, but had not been used because of market difficulties. The increase in labour productivity in the United States during the war is estimated at about 4 per cent. per annum as compared with 2 per cent. in peace time. This is one of the most powerful factors which will influence the course of the trade cycle after the war.

Thus we see that the conclusion of the war and the change over of enterprises from war production to peace products, will threaten many departments of American economy with over-production, in spite of the fact that there will be a considerable deferred demand for consumers' goods and housing. The effect on the market of this deferred demand will be counteracted by considerable unemployment, shorter working hours and the return of workers from the Forces. This mass unemployment will result in a reduction of the current income of the working-class and, therefore, of its purchasing power.

Certain factors, therefore, will act in the direction of curtailing the length of the ascending phase of the industrial cycle in the U.S.A., which we have assumed will follow the close of the European war. But on the other hand, a number of important factors will act in the direction of lengthening the ascending phase. We refer to the most important of these factors below.

(Varga here refers to the probability of the Japanese War continuing for

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some time and thus easing the transition both in the U.S.A. and in Britain. This paragraph is omitted.)

As for the question of prices, the increase during the war in the belligerent countries has been much smaller than in the first world war. There are two reasons for this :—

First, in the larger capitalist countries there was considerable unused productive capacity before the war.

Second, Government regulation of prices became effective earlier in this war and was more systematic.

The index of wholesale prices shows that up to 1943, the rise compared with 1939 had been only 35 per cent. in the U.S.A. and 67 per cent. in Britain. In the neutral countries, the rise was much greater—Sweden 79 per cent., Switzerland 106 per cent., Turkey 478 per cent.

The fact that prices have risen less sharply in the United States and Britain might lead to the assumption, by analogy with the first world war, that at the conclusion of the war there will be a very great increase in prices. We do not, however, believe that this will take place. The gradual transition of economy to peace production, the maintenance of state control on prices and their regulation during the transition period, and particularly in the U.S.A. the surplus productive capacity in agriculture and in the raw materials industries, partly also in the manufacturing industries, will work against the rise in prices in countries with stable money and will in any case weaken the tendency to rise.

It must here be emphasised that although even in the United States there is not a great rise in prices as compared with 1939, all the same prices, just as in the first world war, are on the average above value. In so far as the increased productivity of labour has resulted in a reduction of the social labour time embodied in each unit, as compared with pre-war, prices expressed in gold or in dollars should have been lower than pre-war. For this reason, in the U.S.A. in the post-war period, we should not anticipate any significant rise in prices, while further in the crisis phase which will follow this rise, a very important fall of prices is to be expected. It will be much the same in those countries whose exchange maintains a firm relation to the dollar as, for example, Britain and the British Dominions.

The course of the post-war industrial cycle will be quite different in the countries of continental Europe. In their case, we cannot speak of any ascending phase of production in the post-war period, such as would bring their production to the pre-war level. It is true that the effective demand for goods will exist, but there will be no possibility of producing the goods to satisfy this demand. In these countries a crisis of under-production will be inevitable, just as after the first world war. The shortage of all kinds of means of production and transport will considerably restrict the possibility of productive enterprise. The danger of inflation will be extremely great. In order to avoid sharp inflation or at least to modify it, it is possible for the countries of continental Europe to maintain for many years after the war Government regulation of production of consumers' goods, of prices, and so on.

The degree that this inflationary crisis of under-production will reach in Europe, the period it will last, and the extent to which it will result in open inflation, will depend in considerable measure on how soon and to what extent the countries with an undamaged or stronger economy—U.S.A., Canada and perhaps Britain—are prepared to help in the process of restoration in Europe by advancing credits for the means of production. France has already received credits from the U.S.A.

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for the purchase of locomotives and rolling-stock, raw materials and food. The countries of Eastern Europe will receive aid in the first place from the Soviet Union.

The projected organisation of an International Exchange Fund and an International Bank for Reconstruction should help these aims. . . .

The immense resources of the U.S.A. not only allow it to export considerable amounts of capital to Europe, but because of the danger of over-production and the threat of mass unemployment, such export becomes in the highest degree desirable.

Certainly the export of capital in considerable sums raises the problem of transfers, that is the question of how the profit or interest on the capital exported by the United States can be paid in some natural form. This question aroused a good deal of discussion after the first world war. It is characteristic that the National State Bank in its monthly bulletins in 1920-21 repeatedly expressed strong views against the European Governments being asked to pay the United States their war debts.

The possibility of payment in raw materials has been reduced as a result of the war. After the war, imports of many important types of raw material will fall to a greater or less extent. So far as America is concerned, this refers particularly to rubber, vegetable oils and silk. These together amount to about one-sixth of American imports and in the post-war period they will fall to insignificant amounts as the result of the development of synthetic rubber, soya bean production and improvements in the quality of artificial silk (nylon). Hence after the war it will be necessary for the U.S.A. to import new types of commodities. It is clear that the old tariff policy of the U.S.A. does not correspond to the new position of the U.S.A. in the world market. This was a point which Roosevelt had already called attention to during the war.

Summing up, we may say that after the conclusion of the war, countries whose productive apparatus has not been damaged, or has been improved, will pass through the ascending phase of a productive cycle in the course of two to four years. This phase will end with a crisis of over-production, which in all probability will be more prolonged than the crisis of 1920-21. This crisis of over-production will in turn worsen the situation of the countries of continental Europe, which by that period will have raised their production as compared with the extremely low level at the end of the war, but all the same will still be struggling to overcome the crisis of under-production and the danger of inflation.

After this post-war crisis has been overcome, and the stabilisation of at least some European currencies has been achieved, a new full industrial cycle will begin. But this cycle will not be like the cycle of 1921-29 with its relatively strong ascending phase (especially in the U.S.A. and in Germany) but will resemble rather the cycle of 1929-1937 with its "depression of a special kind" and will not reach the full phase of prosperity. The factors which then prevented the full ascending phase from developing—the sharp contradiction between the unlimited drive of capital for its extension and the restricted limits of the purchasing power of society, and the consequent chronic under-employment of the productive apparatus, together with chronic unemployment—will act with even greater force in the first "normal" post-war cycle.

Certainly it is necessary to emphasise that the Soviet Union, whose economy excludes the possibility of a crisis of over-production, will be a stabilising factor for the economy of the countries of Eastern Europe.

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The cyclical crisis of over-production in the U.S.A. and Britain will find its reflection in the economy of all other countries in the capitalist world, while the absence of crisis in the U.S.S.R. will be a beneficent influence on countries which are linked economically with the U.S.S.R.

Postscript

The following are points from a discussion which took place at the Institute of World Economy and World Politics of the Academy of Sciences at the beginning of January, 1945; a summary of which was published in the second and third issues of the Institute's journal.

IT begins with a resume of Varga's paper, which follows similar lines to the full article printed above.

The first speaker in the discussion, which the Report speaks of as "animated," was Academician I. Trachtenberg. "To me it appears," said Trachtenberg, "that Varga in his analysis of post-war perspectives limited himself to a one-sided posing of the question. In his analysis Varga started from the assumption that the capitalist world will emerge from the war approximately the same as it was before the war, that the war has not introduced any outstanding changes in world economy." After referring to "those changes introduced into world economy by the present war" and that "after the war Germany will fall out of world economy as a strong economic power," he dealt with international collaboration ("Whatever the form and scale of this collaboration, it cannot fail to express itself in post-war economic development") and the "immense" significance of the U.S.S.R. in world economy and world politics.

"In such fashion," concluded Trachtenberg, "I do not deny in principle the formulation of the question which Varga has presented to us. But I consider that it should have been supplemented by others. This would have led to a more correct understanding of possible post-war economic perspectives."

Later speakers in the discussion seem to have taken up this question of what difference war-time changes would introduce; and most speakers concentrated on the degree of State capitalist elements that there would be and their effects, especially in U.S.A. and Britain.

One speaker, Caplan, pointed out that, while a retreat from "State intervention in the economy" was noticeable at present, this retreat "will take place only up to the first crisis." "Once an economic crisis has broken out, any Government in U.S.A. cannot fail to undertake extraordinary measures for reducing unemployment and thereby damping down the crisis. The scale of State expenditure in the struggle with the crisis will many times exceed corresponding expenditure in the past." . . . Another speaker (Gorfinkel) stressed an important difference between the effect of State intervention in war and in peace: in the latter "the State cannot become a buyer without limit of all absolutely surplus goods, since . . . commodity stocks in the hands of the State do not cease to influence the market, i.e., the level of prices. Still more dangerous from the standpoint of private capitalist entrepeneurs is a State economic policy directed towards an extension of State entrepeneurship."

Varga, in his reply, did not refer specifically to "State capitalism" or State intervention internally in each country. But he concluded by saying that "in the ravaged countries of continental Europe, the danger of inflation in my opinion is so serious as to cause

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doubt whether sufficiently effective measures can be taken by the United Nations for protecting the stability of monetary rates of exchange and stimulating export of capital, although there is no doubt that these measures will in very significant degree assist the growth of international commodity exchange and the restoration of European economy."

Western Europe Ltd.

by QUAESTOR

MR. GOLLANCZ has just published a pamphlet explaining the need for a Western Bloc, i.e., a federation of Western Europe, including Western Germany, with pooled economic and military resources, under British effective control. The programme of this bloc, set out in the pamphlet "Am I My Brother's Keeper?" provides for (i) withdrawal of all Allied forces from Germany; (ii) the replacing of all European national forces by a mixed European force (which means, given the relative strengths of the British and the other armies, the absorption of the latter by the British Army); (iii) the transferring of the French, Belgian, Luxemburg and West German coalfields, and of the French and Luxemburg iron ores, to a single control under "public ownership" (how "public" can be seen from the insistence that the German trusts must not be broken up, "for that implies an attempt to run twentieth century industry on nineteenth century lines"); (iv) the putting of all engineering, metallurgical and chemical works in Western Europe under the same control; (v) the participation of the British trusts in the same control; (vi) the British Government to take the lead in establishing this Federation—either by creating a "European Parliament" or by setting up an "Economic Council for Europe," or both—which will create "a single supreme command for the whole of Europe, including Germany, having at its disposal not only civilian resources, but military": and able to produce a general European economic plan, which would "fix production quotas, rates of exchange against agricultural produce, etc."

In order to make all this possible, the plan recognises that "the transfer of existing German equipment on a large scale would be thoroughly undesirable, i.e., the countries like Poland, Yugoslavia and the U.S.S.R., whose industries, railways, harbours, etc., were ravaged by the Germans or by military operations on a scale unprecedented in world history, should be left half-ruined and weakened. The pamphlet, indeed, approvingly quotes from the *Economist's* denunciation of the reparations plan devised by the three Great Powers at Potsdam, on the ground that its methods "reinforce autarky in Russia"—autarky meaning that the Socialist economic system of the U.S.S.R. is independent of pressure by Wall Street and the City of London.

But it hardly required this particularly brazen touch for Mr. Gollancz's pamphlet to be recognisable as a particularly gross and blatant plea for the capitalists of Western Europe to draw together in defence of their property against Socialism. True, it is seasoned with many sanctimonious references to "measures of common ownership," "the cultural tradition of European Socialism," "public ownership" (like the B.B.C.? Or London Transport?) the British Labour Government leading Europe to "Libertarian Socialism" and even to the leftward swing in Europe making "something along these lines . . . practical politics." But

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the author knows that this is only seasoning, and no more, since (i) he is proposing to end the reparations system *now*; when eastern Europe is still half-ruined, while western Europe, relatively well off, is still under capitalist control—including Great Britain; (ii) it is precisely the Left Governments in Europe which have incurred the violent enmity of Mr. Churchill and Mr. Bevin, to the point of British armed intervention *against* the Left in Greece, as in Russia in 1919; (iii) it is precisely the Left parties in Europe, from Belgium and France in the west to Poland and Yugoslavia in the east, which are most resolute in demanding that German machinery, tools, labour and coal shall go to make good some of the havoc wantonly inflicted by the Nazis on their economy—a scheme which the pamphlet denounces as "fantastic" and "quite disastrous."

Indeed, the author stands upon very scant ceremony altogether with the peoples of Europe—apart, of course, from the Germans and the British. Their wishes in the matter are put aside as "hungry nationalism" and "racial intolerance." They are told that Europe was "splintered" in 1919, when some of them came into existence as independent States: that they are "States with no chance of a prosperous independent existence": that their frontiers are "outmoded," "an anachronistic absurdity" and "artificial barriers": that the Czechs, Poles, Bosnians, Slovaks, Croats, Slovenes, would have done well to remain under the rule of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which had "not a few advantages in an economic sense": that it was quite wrong when, in 1919, "the Franco-German border was shifted eastward, dividing Lorraine iron from Ruhr coal" (but not wrong in 1871, we suppose, when the German Army shifted it westward, putting Lorrainers and Alsatians under Prussian rule): in fact, that history was "using the Nazis as its unconscious agents" when they tried to establish their rule over an enslaved Europe, and Hitler's policy (called "foul" for decency's sake) had in its direction "something of the elemental forces of our time."

All this is impudently put forward as the last word in "politico-economic" theory, "economic institutions and policies appropriate to modern problems," "effective planning of the European future," etc. Naturally, the theory fits in very well with the maintenance of the British Empire, with all its frontiers, customs barriers, and so forth, as a system in which fifty million British share (the capitalists to a greater, the workers to a lesser, degree) in the economic exploitation of 390 million Indians and some 75 million other brown, black and yellow peoples. It also fits in with a scheme in which British, French, Belgian and German trusts (with some all-pervasive U.S. dollars, doubtless, well-placed in convenient loans or debentures or credits) would take over control of Europe under the guise of "public corporations," "public ownership" and the like. But when the scheme is recommended as "Libertarian Socialism" and the "United States of Europe," it is well to recall Lenin's trenchant criticism of that particular slogan during the last war:—

> "Of course, *temporary* agreements between the capitalists and the Powers are possible. In this sense there are also possible the United States of Europe, as an agreement of *European* capitalists . . . about what? Only about how together to crush Socialism in Europe, together to guard their stolen colonies *against* Japan and America, who have been very much overlooked in the present distribution of colonies, and who have grown stronger during the last half-century infinitely more quickly than backward, monarchical Europe, which has begun to rot from age. By

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comparison with the United States of America, Europe as a whole signifies economic stagnation. On the present economic basis, i.e., under capitalism, the United States of Europe would mean the organisation of reaction to delay the more rapid development of America."

When Lenin wrote that, in 1915, the Soviet Union—the vanguard of Socialism in Europe—had not yet come into existence: nor had the new democratic States taken the place of the rotting monarchies or the terrorist landowner-capitalist dictatorships which succeeded them in 1919. But his characterisation of the role of the "United States of Europe," or Western Bloc, could hardly have been more to the point if he had read all the latest literature on the subject, from General Smuts's speech in October, 1943, to Mr. Gollancz's pamphlet in November, 1945. More particularly, if he had seen the third Labour Government, so far from doing anything to allay Russian "fear of the West" and "to lead Europe to unity and a Libertarian Socialism" (i) maintaining fascism in power in Greece; (ii) doing as little as possible to crush the relics of fascism in Italy and Germany; (iii) taking the lead in suppressing the Indonesian and Indo-Chinese movements for national independence from colonial servitude—moreover not on its own behalf, but on behalf of temporarily enfeebled Dutch and French capitalists; (iv) refusing genuine emancipation to the Burmese and the Indians; (v) maintaining open hostility to the new democracies in Rumania and Bulgaria; (vi) joining with the U.S.A. in "atomic diplomacy" directed against the U.S.S.R.

It remains to mention that Mr. Gollancz serves up this scheme for a last stand of capitalism in Western Europe under a thick and unappetising sauce of false sentiment and false history. Europe—with its vigorous new democracies in the east, with its swing to the left in Italy and France, with its revived guerilla struggle in Spain, with its amazing popular efforts to set about economic reconstruction—is represented as "economic chaos . . . moral chaos . . . a moral void . . . a maelstrom . . . the nations going to pieces." The food and production situation in Germany is exaggerated beyond all recognition on the lines made familiar by the now notorious campaign about the "starving millions from the Russian zone." To take two examples: we are told that Ruhr coal production rose from 10 per cent. to 20 per cent. of pre-war between May and August, but that it won't exceed 40 per cent. by next spring. Yet by mid-October it already was 32 per cent., and the Saar 37 per cent. Again, a horrific picture is drawn of starvation. But *The Times* Special Correspondent (November 12) reports:—

> "Travelling through the British zone, including the Ruhr, it is hard to believe in the danger of serious illness through lack of food. The Germans, on the whole, are better dressed than people in our own industrial regions. They look, if anything, rather healthier and less strained—after all, many of them have been better fed during the war, drawing on supplies from all over Europe."

Most of the women are losing weight now, and during the winter "will have used up their last stocks," it is true. But you would search in vain through Mr. Gollancz's pamphlet for any sympathy or practical proposals to help those peoples at whose expense those "last stocks" were accumulated.

As for his false history, it is sufficient to mention that Hitler's coming to power in Germany is represented as being the result of "economic crisis . . . hunger and disease . . . moral and economic chaos" (p. 5)—with not a mention of the German big business

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and landowning magnates who put him in office, or of the decisive systematic encouragement and assistance given him by the Baldwin and Chamberlain Governments. Indeed, the pamphlet itself, when the author wants to prove how essential German economy was to Europe in the middle thirties (p. 7), exposes its previous picture as grossly exaggerated.

The pamphlet is as full of apologies for the Nazis as it is of other flagrant insults to the many millions of those who died to wipe fascism off the earth.

Document of the Month

Constitution of World Federation of Trade Unions (Paris, October 1945)

Preamble—Aims and Methods

The World Federation of Trade Unions exists to improve the living and working conditions of the people of all lands and to unite them in pursuit of the objectives sought by all freedom-loving peoples as set forth in the Declarations of the London World Trade Union Conference in February, 1945.

These aims and objects can only be fully attained by the establishment of a World Order in which all the resources of the world will be utilised for the benefit of all its peoples, the vast majority of whom are workers by hand and brain whose protection and whose progress depend upon the union of all their organised forces nationally and internationally.

The World Federation of Trade Unions therefore proclaims its prime purposes to be:—

(*a*) To organise and unite within its ranks the trade unions of the whole world, irrespective of considerations of race, nationality, religion, or political opinion ;

(*b*) To assist, wherever necessary, the workers in countries socially or industrially less developed, in setting up their trade unions;

(*c*) To carry on the struggle for the extermination of all fascist forms of government and every manifestation of fascism, under whatever form it operates and by whatever name it may be known;

(*d*) To combat war and the causes of war and work for a stable and enduring peace;

By giving full support to the establishment of a powerful and effective international organisation armed with all necessary power to prevent aggression and maintain peace;

By supporting the widest possible international co-operation in the social, economic spheres and measures for the industrial development and full utilisation of the resources of the undeveloped countries;

By carrying on a struggle against reaction and for the full exercise of the democratic rights and liberties of all peoples;

(*e*) To represent the interest of world labour in all international agencies whose responsibility will be to solve the problems of world organisation, resting upon agreements or conventions concluded between the United Nations, and in such other international bodies as may be decided upon by the World Federation of Trade Unions;

(*f*) To organise the common struggle of trade unions of all countries:

Against, all encroachments on the economic and social rights of the workers and on democratic liberties;

For the satisfaction of the need of the workers for security of full employment;

For the progressive improvement of wages, hours and working and living conditions of the workers.

For full and adequate social security to protect workers and their families against the hazards of unemployment, sickness, accident and old age.

For the adoption of all other measures furthering the social and economic well-being of the workers.

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(g) To plan and organise the education of trade union members on the question of international labour unity and to awaken them to a consciousness of their individual responsibility for the realisation of trade union purposes and aims.

In order to achieve these ends, the World Federation of Trade Unions bases its work on the following principles:

(1) Full democracy within the trade unions of all countries and close collaboration among them;

(2) Permanent contact with affiliated trade union organisations, fraternal support and assistance to them in their work;

(3) Systematic exchange of information and experience in trade union work with the object of strengthening the solidarity of the international labour movement;

(4) Co-ordination of action by the workers' organisations for the realisation of their international aims and decisions;

(5) Protection of the interests of the workers in emigration and immigration;

(6) Using every available means of making known and explaining the purposes for which the World Federation of Trade Unions is organised, the objectives which it seeks, its programme for the achievement of these objectives and its decisions on specific issues.

Book Reviews

Fabian Fable

Beatrice Webb by Margaret Cole (Longmans, Green & Co., 10s 6*d*).

SINCE THE conversion of Saul, the persecutor of Christianity, to Paul, its apostle, which symbolised the change of an epoch, there can have been few more remarkable transitions, also of symbolical value for the modern world, than that of the Webbs in their later years. After having been the principal inventors and leaders of Fabian Anti-Marxism and Western European Revisionism, which wrought such havoc on socialism and the labour movement of Western Europe for half a century and deprived it of its chance of priority in the victory of socialism, they lived to see the collapse of all their theories and to celebrate with enthusiasm the triumph of Marxism and Communism as the only successful path to socialism. The Webbs, who began by demanding that Socialism must be cabined, cribbed and confined to meet the narrow compass of the Union Jack, the Ten Commandments and the British Constitution, ended by declaring their lack of further interest in the future of Britain and turning their eyes to the land of Soviet Power and Communist leadership as representing the future for humanity. Here is indeed a rich subject for a biographer, illuminating for its whole period (and not least for latter-day young Fabians)—a dramatic expression of what the theorists of the old Greek tragedy used to call the "peripeteia" or reversal of fortunes of the hero, which enabled the audience, with foreknowledge of the end, to appreciate the full irony of the earlier phases.

A splendid theme for a biographer. But scarcely a suitable theme for the Secretary of the Fabian Society. Had the life of its subject come to an end in 1932, this might have passed well enough as a pleasantly readable prosaic memoir of a prosaic subject—the philanthropic bourgeois, assiduous, painstaking, indefatigable, with many virtues and much useful work done, but with all the defects of a narrow, philistine, insular outlook, whose influence was poisonous for the labour movement. But prim Fabian orthodoxy is no match for the concluding phase, which appears as a vagary of old age. With laboured contortions the writer endeavours to explain that Beatrice Webb could not have meant what she said when she declared in 1932 "that 'the inevitability of gradualness' was dead." The Nazi agent, Valtin, is quoted as an authority on Communism. With the customary Fabian jaunty inaccuracy the old myth is trotted out of "Marx's opinion of sixty or seventy years before that it was impossible that Socialism should be established first in Russia rather than in a more developed country." The Labour Research Department is described as coming "under Communist control," " but " (much virtue in a "but") "the tradition of accurate information and inquiry, which was its inheritance from its Fabian ancestry, persisted

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strongly enough to save it from banning'' by Transport House—with complete ignoring of the ban which was imposed by Transport House, and which was finally forced to be withdrawn, not by Fabianism, but by the united pressure of the working-class movement.

While there is much useful material in this memoir, which will repay reading, it can scarcely be regarded as an adequate record of the phase of socialist history represented by the Webbs. It might, of course, be argued that to have arrived only a decade and a half after the Bolshevik Revolution, not even at the time of the first Five Year Plan, but only after the successful accomplishment of socialist construction had become obvious to the dullest, was no great achievement for a socialist leader or a political thinker. But it was a great achievement for a Fabian.

R. P. D.

Electricity in Britain

Electricity, Public or Private Monopoly by F. Hamlyn Dennis (V. Gollancz, pp. 144, 7*s*6*d*).

SIXTY-THREE YEARS ago a French scientist, Deprez, made the first successful experiment in the use of long-distance electric power transmission. While prominent technicians of the day such as Edison completely failed to recognise the gigantic social importance of this discovery, Marx and Engels were quick to seize on its implications. Engels wrote:—

> The latest discovery of Deprez . . . will definitely emancipate industry from every boundary placed by local conditions . . . and if at first it will be of benefit only for the *towns*, in the long run it will become a most powerful instrument for the elimination of the contrast between town and country.

Since then has come about the large-scale application of electric power for driving machinery in factories; the widespread use of electricity for domestic purposes; the more recent discoveries of the use of electrical processes in the metallurgical and chemical industries, and so on.

Yet in spite of giant strides in technique, the possibilities envisaged by Engels still remain substantially unfulfilled in this country. For example, 44 per cent. of rural dwellings and the vast majority of agricultural holdings are still not supplied with electricity; the electrification of the railways is in its infancy; the use of electricity for district heating has scarcely begun. What is holding up the development is the chaotic and antiquated structure of the industry in which powerful private monopolies, continually striving to tighten their grip and increase their already stupendous profits, are the chief enemies of progress.

The new Government are committed to a programme of nationalisation of the industry and undoubtedly the monopolies will fight them to the bitter end. In such a situation Mr. Dennis's book could hardly be more appropriate. A power engineer by profession, he combines personal experience of the technical problems involved with a shrewd understanding of the economic set-up of the industry. The book traces the development of the industry; it makes a detailed examination of the relative merits of company and municipal undertakings and demonstrates with irrefutable evidence the superiority of the latter in spite of the handicaps under which they operate; it exposes the activities of the holding companies in the industry; it examines the various proposals for reorganisation and makes an unanswerable case for nationalisation. Most important of all is the author's conception of nationalisation. This is envisaged, not as a ''soulless bureaucracy,'' but as a process whereby the consumer can be drawn into management and control of the industry, and in which the local authorities, with their long experience and good record, will have a significant part to play.

N. B.

Publications Received

BOOKS

The Incidence of Local Rates in Great Britain (Cambridge University Press, 6*s*, 64 pp.).
Crossroad of Two Continents by Feliks Gross (Columbia University Press (O.U.P.), 13*s*6*d*, 162 pp.).
Falmouth Massachusetts by Millard C. Faught (Columbia University Press (O.U.P.) 18*s*6*d*, 190 pp.).
War Crimes by Manfred Lachs (Stevens & Sons Ltd., 7*s*6*d*, 108 pp.).

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"Because of this, the surprising lack of support for the Guarantee Fund during 1945 must give rise to grave concern, and we have made this general effort to help.

"We understand that LABOUR MONTHLY requires a steady flow of cash, month by month, rather than bursts of this sort; but we have not been regular guarantors because of the heavy responsibility we feel towards our friends of the Indian working-class movement. We looked to readers at home to provide the necessary £100 a month.

"But far too often it has not been forthcoming, and the present alarming position of the Fund demands exceptional efforts. Here, then, is ours, together with a reminder that there is still time to clear off arrears and start 1946 with a credit balance!

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Reappearing December 1st

The MODERN QUARTERLY

EDITOR: DR. JOHN LEWIS

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Demy 8vo. 96pp. 2s. 6d. *Annual Subscription 11s.*

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Published by the Proprietors, The Trinity Trust, 134, Ballards Lane, London, N.3, and printed by Evans, Spencer & Co. Ltd., London, E.C.4. in the United Kingdom of Great Britain.

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